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ABSTRACT

Representatives from 154 National Association for Business Teacher Education institutions responded to a questionnaire designed to elicit responses about the most effective recruiting practices for business teacher education programs. Several questions were included to determine the present status of business education programs and trends in these programs since 1982. Data revealed enrollments are increasing in business teacher education in about 45 percent of responding colleges of business and education. Enrollment trends for administrative office management programs did not look as encouraging. Respondents cited as key ingredients necessary for maintenance and/or growth of a quality business education program the following attributes (in order of decreasing mention): relevant, innovative, complete programs; competent staff; strong recruitment program; modern equipment; administrative support; availability of jobs and better salaries; interaction with public schools; and program reputation and graduate quality. Recruiting techniques respondents listed as successful included letter writing, school visits, student organizations, sponsor activities, student teachers, alumni, newsletters, advisory committees, campus recruiting, and professional activities. (YLB)

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IMPROVING ENROLLMENTS IN BUSINESS TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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IMPROVING ENROLLMENTS IN BUSINESS TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

INTRODUCTION

In 1980 at a conference titled "A symposium: Business Teacher Education" held at Rider College, Dean Clayton addressed a group of business education leaders. He indicated that "The increased demands for students in the world of business and related areas are probably without precedent. It is, therefore, a basic assumption and/or principle that with these demands, there should be a co-existing demand for preservice and in-service programs to supply students (prospective and experienced teachers) to assist in fulfilling these demands."[1] This statement, and many like it, would indicate a continuing and increasing demand for collegiate business teacher education programs. As we well know, however, business teacher education enrollments showed great declines during the early 1980's. There was also a corresponding decrease in the number of business teacher education programs in colleges and universities.

Business teacher educators expressed great concern about the depressing enrollment figures in business teacher education, and about the number of good programs which were being eliminated. A study was conducted in 1982, therefore, to determine some of the problems and solutions.[2] One solution which received high marks was "to develop a strong recruitment program." The NBEA Task Force on Critical Issues included recruiting as one of their critical issues for Business Teacher Education.[3] The National Association of Teacher Educators for Business Education also considered recruiting as an important issue. A task force was developed to study "Improving Enrollments in Business Teacher Education Programs."

The task given to the NATEBE task force was to design action plans for increasing enrollments in Business Teacher Education Programs. In order to accomplish this task, a questionnaire was sent to all National Association for Business Teacher Education representatives. The questionnaire was designed to elicit responses about the most effective recruiting practices of the responding institutions, colleges, business education departments, and individuals. Several questions were included to determine the present status of business education programs, and trends of these programs since 1982. Representatives from 154 (60.2%) of NABTE institutions responded to the questionnaire.

ENROLLMENT TRENDS

The information presented in the table on page 2 indicates what is happening to enrollments in business teacher education and office management programs. The figures for 1982 are also presented for comparison to determine trends since 1982. The data reveal a rather encouraging trend for Business Teacher Education in those responding institutions. Enrollments are increasing in business teacher education in about 45 percent of the responding Colleges of Business and Education. This compares to increasing enrollments in only about 11 to 12 percent of those schools in 1982. Those institutions showing decreasing business teacher education enrollments were also way down from 1982, with Colleges of Education showing only 16.1 percent and Colleges of Business with 26.6 percent.

Enrollment trends for administrative office management programs do not look as encouraging as those for business teacher education. Of the responding Colleges of Business, 34.5 percent show increasing enrollments compared to 60 percent in 1982. Colleges of Education showed increasing enrollments in 28.6 percent of their institutions compared to 42.9 percent in 1982. Responding representatives

indicated declining enrollments of 18.2 percent in Colleges of Business and 14.3 percent in Colleges of Education. These figures compared to 12.5 and 9.5 percent respectively in 1982. When adding the increasing and decreasing percentages together, it is obvious that the enrollments in many of the programs are not changing.

BUSINESS TEACHER EDUCATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE MANAGEMENT
ENROLLMENT TRENDS IN RESPONDING NABTE INSTITUTIONS*

BUSINESS TEACHER EDUCATION

Location of Program	Increasing 1982	Increasing 1985	Decreasing 1982	Decreasing 1985	Remaining the Same 1982	Remaining the Same 1985
College of Business	10.1%	45.1%	54.0%	26.6%	36.0%	28.3%
College of Education	11.4	45.2	48.6	16.1	40.0	38.7
Both CBA and COE	--	--	50.0	--	50.0	--
Other (Divisions, Centers, Etc.)	18.5	30.8	55.5	30.8	26.0	38.4

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE MANAGEMENT

Location of Program	Increasing 1982	Increasing 1985	Decreasing 1982	Decreasing 1985	Remaining the Same 1982	Remaining the Same 1985
College of Business	60.0%	34.5%	12.5%	18.2%	27.5%	47.3%
College of Education	42.9	28.6	9.5	14.3	47.6	57.1
Other (Divisions, Centers, Etc.)	45.5	22.2	22.7	11.1	31.8	66.6

*154 NABTE Representatives Responded to the Questionnaire

Further analysis of the incoming questionnaires indicated that 54.5 percent of the responses were from Colleges of Business, 28.2 percent were from Colleges of Education, and 11.8 were from other arrangements such as departments, centers, and so forth. In the 1982 study 57.4 percent of the responses were from Colleges of Business, 22.6 percent from Colleges of Education, and 20 percent from "other." The alarming figure is that 5.5 percent of the responses came from institutions which have discontinued their business teacher education programs this past spring, or will discontinue them after this school year.

INGREDIENTS NECESSARY FOR GROWTH OF BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMS

One of the questions asked of NABTE representatives was "What do you consider to be the key ingredients necessary for maintenance and/or growth of a quality business education program at your institution?" Listed below are some of the most common responses, with the one mentioned most often listed first.

1. Relevant, innovative, complete programs
2. A competent staff (productive, dynamic, caring)
3. A strong recruitment program
4. Modern equipment "on the cutting edge of technology"
5. Administrative support
6. Availability of jobs, better salaries, etc.
7. Interaction with the public schools
8. Reputation of the program and quality of its graduates
9. A "critical mass" of students

RECRUITING PRACTICES

It is obvious from the listing of key ingredients shown above that recruiting is an important factor in the growth of good business education programs. The respondents listed a wide variety of recruiting techniques which they have found to be successful. They are shown below.

1. Letter writing. Writing letters to a variety of different prospects seems to be very effective. Some send letters to those who have indicated an interest in business education to college/university recruiters. Others write to those who have taken the ACT and have indicated a subject preference. Letters to community college graduates also seems to be effective. Still others write winners of FBLA and OEA contest winners in their area or state. In addition to writing to student prospects, many indicate that they write to high school and community college teachers. Some go so far as to send letters to every high school and community college in their state each year. Mailings to prospective students and/or their teachers are usually accompanied by some kind of pamphlet or brochure.

2. School visits. In addition to writing letters, many respondents make visits to area high schools and community colleges. Several recommended that college business education students be taken along on these visits. While visiting schools, it is extremely important to visit with their counselors to discuss your programs. They can be extremely helpful in guiding students toward your programs. Most colleges and universities have full-time recruiters. It was recommended that they be given business education brochures, pamphlets, and so forth. It was also recommended that whenever possible, business teachers accompany these recruiters to high school career days.

3. Student organizations. Students like to hear from other students about business education. One good plan is to have Phi Beta Lambda and/or Office Education Association members and former FBLA members return to their home FBLA and/or OEA chapters. Another suggestion is to have Pi Omega Pi members return to their home schools and speak to various business classes.

4. Sponsor activities. Sponsoring activities on campus seems to be a very popular recruiting technique. Some sponsor district, regional, and/or state FBLA and OEA contests. Others sponsor departmental "fairs" and invite area high school and community college students. Still others sponsor a variety of conferences and workshops for business teachers.

5. Student teachers. Student teachers can serve as some of the best recruiters that business education can find. They should attempt to arrange to talk to every business class in their high school about the benefits of teaching business.

6. Alumni. Alumni can serve as excellent recruiters for business education. If they are business teachers, they can discuss their former college or university with their students.

7. Newsletters. A number of business education departments publish a newsletter which can be an effective recruiting tool.

8. Advisory committees. Advisory committee members often have connections in business and education which allow them to help in the recruiting program. They can vary successfully speak to civic groups, parent groups, and student groups about your program.

9. Campus recruiting. Some of the best recruiting for your program can be done on the campus. Current business education students should be encouraged to talk about the program to other students. Some schools have orientation courses in which representatives from the various programs discuss their programs. The reputation of the program and the faculty is crucial in campus recruiting.

10. Professional activities. Most of the activities listed above are "professional activities." However, respondents to the questionnaire indicated a variety of other professional activities which they felt would help recruit students. They included such things as faculty and students attending professional business education meetings at all levels. Any time that faculty members gain recognition at professional meetings, the programs also gain recognition. Other professional activities included such things as faculty working with teacher and youth groups off campus. Activities might include speaking, serving on panels, judging contests, and so forth.

A variety of excellent recruiting techniques are shown above. Each business education program must decide which of these techniques will best meet its needs. As the key ingredients on page 3 indicate, however, recruiting alone does not ensure a quality business education program. Without such key ingredients as relevant programs and competent staff no program can endure long in a changing educational environment.

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